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STEPHEN KING'S

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MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
1 of 4

MARC GUGGENHEIM • ALEX MALEEV

STEPHEN KING'S

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Special Thanks to Chuck Verrill, Marsha DeFilippo, Brian Stark, Jim Nausedas, Jim McCann and Arune Singh.

STEPHEN KING'S N. THE COMIC SERIES No. 1, May 2010. Published Monthly by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10018. © 2010 Stephen King. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Stephen King. Marvel and its logos are TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$3.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032852) in the direct market. Consensus Agreement #6068537. Printed in the USA. ALAN FINE, EVP - Office Of The President, Marvel Worldwide, Inc. and EVP & CMD Marvel Characters B.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher - Print, Animation & Digital Media; JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP of Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'REEVE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIEL, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Ron Stern, VP of Business Development, at rsterm@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-0158.



MOTTON, ME., THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 18, 1896

TRAGEDY IN MOTTON

MOTTON, ME., JULY 26.—At an undetermined time last night a cabin on the field owned by Andrew Ackerman seven miles east of here, caught fire and burned down. Laura Ackerman, and her six-year-old daughter, Amanda, perished in the flames. Nothing but their charred remains were found.

The cabin was burned down to its stone supporting girders, but accounts differ as to whether the exact number of those stone beams totaled seven or eight.

Mr. Ackerman's remains were located nearly the wreckage. He apparently expired due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

There were no eyewitnesses to the incident and Mr. Ackerman's motivations remain unknown at this point.

However, the frightful shrieks of Mr. Ackerman's wife and daughter and the cackle of the flames could be heard for miles away.

FIFTEEN BRUISED.

Bad Wreck on the Iron Mountain in Arkansas.

PASSENGERS RECEIVE INJURIES

Wreck of Heavy Train in Arkansas

THE BARRUNDIA KILLING.

The Purser of the Acapulco Gives a Version of the Tragedy.

New York, Sept. 18.—A. P. Mulligan, who was purser of the steamer Barrundia, upon which General Barrundia was butchered by soldiers of the Guatemalan Government in the harbor of San Jose de Guatemala, reached this city on Monday and is at the Grand Central Hotel. He resigned his position last week, but he has been wanted to see of South America, and intends to study medicine in this city.

Mr. Mulligan tells this story of the shooting, of which he was an eye witness:

The Acapulco left Champerico at noon August 27 and reached San Jose de Guatemala seven hours later. Every one on Captain Pitt's ship was delighted to find the American war vessel. The Acapulco and Ranger lying there. The Acapulco anchored half a mile from the Barrundia. That night Captain Reiter, of the Ranger, and certain of the other naval officials visited the situation and Captain Pitt explained the situation and hoped they would not allow Barrundia to be taken from his vessel.

Reiter replied: "I am sorry to do any thing for you without the order of the port captain."

Secretary of the Navy. Captain Pitt refused to give a file of marines to prevent Barrundia from violence. Pitt also refused to give his telegram to the Guatemalan government.

At 11:30 o'clock the Barrundia was fired by General Barrundia's men who had been arrested by the Americans.

General Barrundia came on the Barrundia in uniform and in uniform.

General Barrundia's men who had been arrested by the Americans.

TRAGEDY

One Man Commits Murder.

TWO DAUGHTERS DEAD, ONE

The Wife's Frenzied Faculty of Man Head—Great Excitement in New Hampshire Town of Portsmouth.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H., Sept. 18.—A terrible tragedy occurred in Portsmouth last night and the city was in great excitement until early morning. A mob of several hundred men surrounded the tenement house on the street where the body of a woman was found.

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A. ACKERMAN

JULY 26, 1911



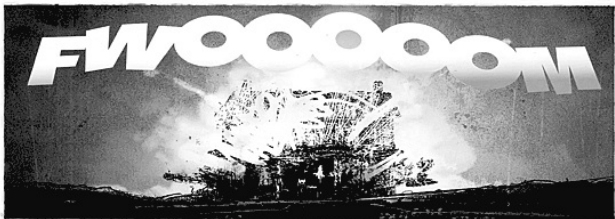
NOOOOOOOOOOOO
PLEASE DON'T DON'T
DON'T!!!!



ANDREW,
PLEASE DON'T
DO THIS--



FWOOOOOM



OHGODOHGOD
OHGOD--







S. BONSANT LECLAIRE

MAY 28, 2008



Dear Charlie...

It seems both strange and perfectly natural to call you that, although when I last saw you, I was nearly half the age I am now.

I was sixteen and had a terrible crush on you. (Did you know? Of course you did.)



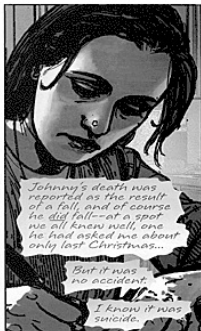
Now I'm a happily married woman with a little boy and you're a preeminent medical expert with a weekly column in *American News*.

Pretty far from the days we spent fishing and going to the movies at The Railroad in Freeport, right?



Thank you for your note after Johnny's death.

You saw his obituary, of course. Accidental death can cover a multitude of sins, can't it?



Johnny's death was reported as the result of a fall, and of course he did fall--at a spot we all knew well, one he had asked me about only last Christmas...

But it was no accident.

I know it was suicide.

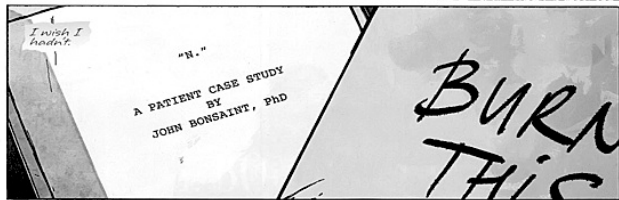
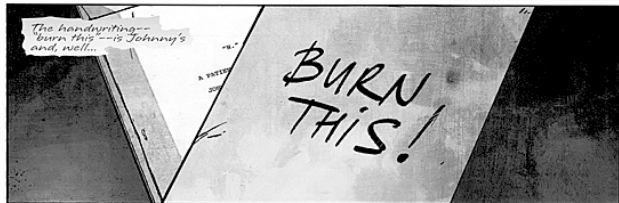


As a doctor yourself, you know psychiatrists like Johnny have an extremely high rate of it.

It's as if the patients' woes are a kind of acid, eating away at the psychic defenses of their therapists.

But I think--and this gets me to the material I'm enclosing with this letter--I think Johnny's suicide was caused--prompted?--by a particular patient.





June 1, 2007

He is 40 years old, a partner in a large Portland accounting firm, divorced, the father of two daughters. One is doing postgraduate work in California, the other is a Junior at a college here in Maine. He describes his current relationship with his ex-wife as "distant but amicable."

He says, "I know I look older than 40. It's because I haven't been sleeping. I've tried Ambien and the other one, the Green moth one, they only make me feel groggy."

When I ask how long he's been suffering from insomnia, he needs to think it over.

Ten months.

I ask him if it's the insomnia that brought him to the ceiling. Most patients choose the chain of thought to their visit— one woman told me that trying on the chain would make her like a joke neurotic in a New Yorker cartoon — but he has gone to the doctor's couch. He lies there with his hands laced tightly together.

"I think we both know better than that, Dr. Bonsaint," he says. I ask him what he means.

If I only wanted to get rid of the bags under my eyes, I'd either see a plastic surgeon or go to my family doctor — who recommended you, by the way, he says you're very good — and ask for something stronger than one of the Green moth pills. There must be stronger stuff, right?

Nothing to this.

I pretend it, insomnia's always a symptom of something else, I tell him that isn't always so, but in most cases it is another problem, insomnia is rarely the only symptom.

"Have others," he says. "Tons. For example, at my shoes."

"N." A PATIENT CASE STUDY BY JOHN BONSAIN, PhD

N. NASH

JUNE 1, 2007

INSOMNIA.
OCD, OCPD, YOU'VE
HEARD IT ALL A HUNDRED
TIMES BEFORE, I'M
SURE...

BUT IT'S THE UNDERLYING
CAUSE OF THOSE PROBLEMS
I CAME HERE TO DEAL WITH.
THE REASON I CAN'T SLEEP.
THE REASON FOR THE
COMPULSIONS.

AND
WHAT IS
THAT?

THE REASON IS
WHAT HAPPENED IN
AUGUST OF LAST YEAR.
WHAT HAPPENED
TO ME.

AND
WHAT WAS
THAT?

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH ME COULD
BE VERY
DANGEROUS.

DANGEROUS
TO ME.

AND
POSSIBLY TO
OTHERS.

I'M AT
CONDITION
ORANGE HERE,
DR. BONGAINT.
EDGING INTO
CONDITION
RED.

WITH YOUR
OCPD?

YES.

DO YOU COUNT
THINGS?

OF
COURSE
I DO.

THE NUMBER OF
CLUES IN THE
NEW YORK TIMES
CROSSWORD
PUZZLES--

ON SUNDAYS,
COUNT TWICE
BECAUSE THOSE
PUZZLES ARE
SUGAR & SP
DOUBLE-CHECKING
SEEMS IN
ORDER.

--MY OWN
FOOTSTEPS.
NUMBER OF
TELEPHONE
RINGS WHEN
I CALL
SOMEONE.

I EAT AT THE
COLONIAL DINER
ON MOST WORKDAYS.
IT'S THREE BLOCKS
FROM THE OFFICE,
AND ON MY WAY
THERE, I'LL COUNT
BLACK SHOES.

ON MY WAY
BACK, BROWN
ONES. I TRIED
RED ONCE.
BUT THAT WAS
RIDICULOUS.

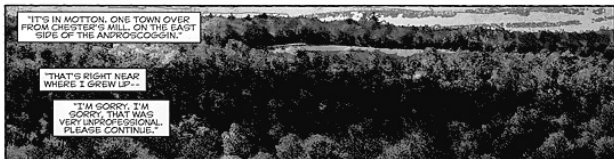
DO YOU HAVE TO COUNT
A MINIMUM NUMBER OF
SHOES TO ACHIEVE...
SATISFACTION?

THIRTY'S GOOD.
FIFTEEN PAIR, MOST
PAYS. THAT'S NO
PROBLEM.

THIRTY IS
PURTY. MY
LITTLE RHYME.
FIFTEEN
IS KEEN.

AND WHY? WHY
IS IT NECESSARY TO
REACH A CERTAIN
NUMBER?







"ANYWAY...I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER, YOU SEE.

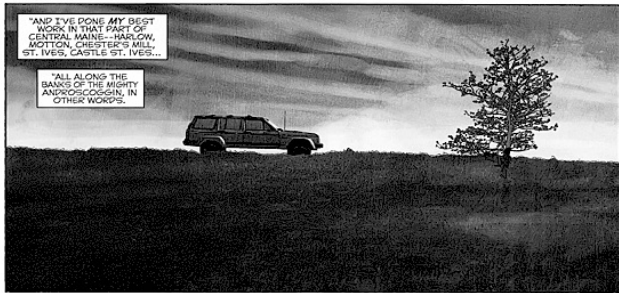
"WELL, NOT A PHOTOGRAPHER BY TRADE. MORE BY INCLINATION. A HOBBY.

"LANDSCAPE SHOTS. I USE A NIKON, A FILM CAMERA, NOT A DIGITAL.



"AND TOWARDS THE END OF EVERY YEAR, I TOOK THE TWELVE BEST PIX AND TURNED THEM INTO A CALENDAR.

"I HAD THEM PRINTED AT A LITTLE PLACE IN FREEPORT CALLED THE WINDHOVER PRESS. IT'S PRICY, BUT THEY DO GOOD WORK.



"AND I'VE DONE *MY* BEST WORK IN THAT PART OF CENTRAL MAINE--HARLOW, MOTTON, CHESTER'S MILL, ST. IVES, CASTLE ST. IVES...

"ALL ALONG THE BANKS OF THE MIGHTY ANDROSCOGGIN, IN OTHER WORDS.

"AND ON ONE OF MY
RAMBLES LAST
AUGUST, I CAME TO
A DIRT ROAD IN
MOTION THAT I DIDN'T
REMEMBER EVER
SEEING BEFORE.

"I PASSED A
LITTLE SIGN
TACKLED TO
A TREE."

ACKERMAN'S FIELD

NO HUNTING
KEEP OUT



"I GOT OUT OF
MY CAR, WALKED
A LITTLE BIT..."



"AND THERE
IT WAS."

"AND IT TOOK
MY BREATH AWAY."



"REALITY IS A MYSTERY, DR. BONSAINT, AND THE EVERYDAY TEXTURE OF THINGS IS THE CLOTH WE DRAW OVER IT TO MASK ITS BRIGHTNESS AND DARKNESS."

"BUT THERE ARE PLACES WHERE THE CLOTH GETS RAGGED AND REALITY IS THIN. THE FACE BENEATH PEEPS THROUGH..."

"ACKERMAN'S FIELD IS ONE OF THOSE PLACES."

"BECAUSE WHEN YOU LOOK, WHEN YOU WALK UP TO THE STONES AS I DID, AND YOU LOOK AT THEM..."

"YOU CAN SEE THE **FACES**."

"NOT HUMAN FACES, EITHER. THE FACES OF **BEASTS**."

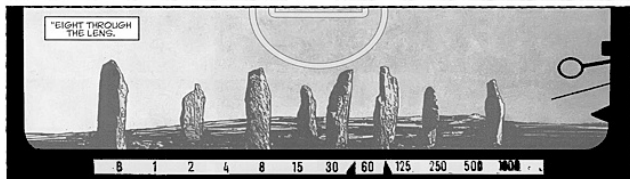
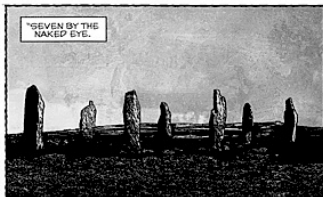
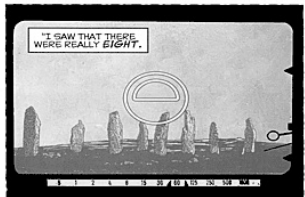
"AND **MONSTERS**."

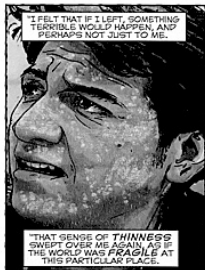
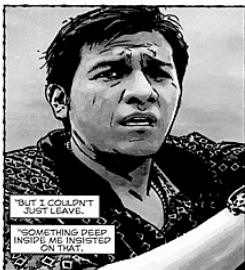
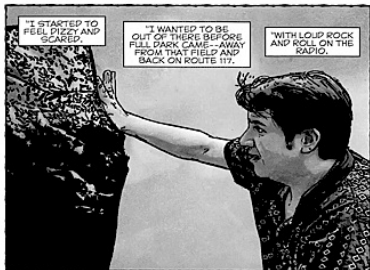
"OR IT COULD JUST BE A TRICK OF THE LIGHT."

"I SNAPPED SOME PICTURES."

"FIVE."

"A BAD NUMBER, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YET."







"BY THE TIME I GOT
BACK TO WHERE I'D
STARTED, I WAS
TREMBLING AND WET
WITH SWEAT AS WELL
AS MIST AND DEW.



"BUT THERE WERE **EIGHT**.
EIGHT STONES IN ACKERMAN'S
FIELD. A GOOD NUMBER.

"A **SAFE**
NUMBER.

"AND IT NO LONGER MATTERED
IF I LOOKED AT THEM THROUGH
THE CAMERA'S VIEWFINDER
OR NOT.

"AFTER **TOUCHING**
THEM, THEY WERE **FIXED**.



"BUT...BUT I STILL FELT AFRAID.
THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG.

"EVERYTHING
SCREAMED IT.

"EVEN THE SILENCE
OF THE BIRDS.



"SO I RAN.



"I WAS BACK AT MY
CAR BEFORE I KNEW
IT. I MIGHT HAVE EVEN
BEEN TOUCHING THE
DOOR HANDLE....

"WHEN SOMETHING
TURNED ME AROUND
AGAIN.



"AND THAT'S
WHEN I SAW."



"THERE WAS SOMETHING
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
STONES."

"IT WAS TURNING
VERY SLOWLY, BUT
IT NEVER TOOK ITS
EYES OFF ME."

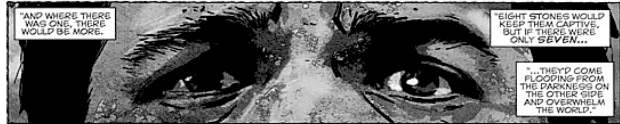


"AND IT
SAW ME."

"IT SAW ME
LOOKING."



"AND IT
GRINNED."



"AND WHERE THERE
WAS ONE, THERE
WOULD BE MORE."

"EIGHT STONES WOULD
KEEP THEM CAPTIVE,
BUT IF THERE WERE
ONLY SEVEN..."

"...THEY'D COME
FLOODING FROM
THE DARKNESS ON
THE OTHER SIDE
AND OVERWHELM
THE WORLD."

JUNE 15, 2007

THE STONES
ARE A GATE.
I THINK. A GATE
BETWEEN
REALITIES...

BUT THERE'S
A GATE IN OUR
HEADS, TOO.

ONE THAT
KEEPS INSANITY
IN ALL OF US FROM
FLOODING OUR
INTELLECTS.





THAT... THAT
WHOLE OTHER COSMOS
WOULD COME SPILLING
THROUGH THE BOTTOM
OF A WET PAPER
BAG.

I'VE SEEN
IT HAPPEN
ALREADY.

IN MY
DREAMS.



"NIGHTMARES,
REALLY.

"EVERY NIGHT...

"THE SAME
DREAM.

"THE SAME DARK,
UNSPEAKABLE DREAM.



"I COULD SEE IT,
CLEAR AS DAY.

"AS GRAY-BLACK
AS TWILIGHT.

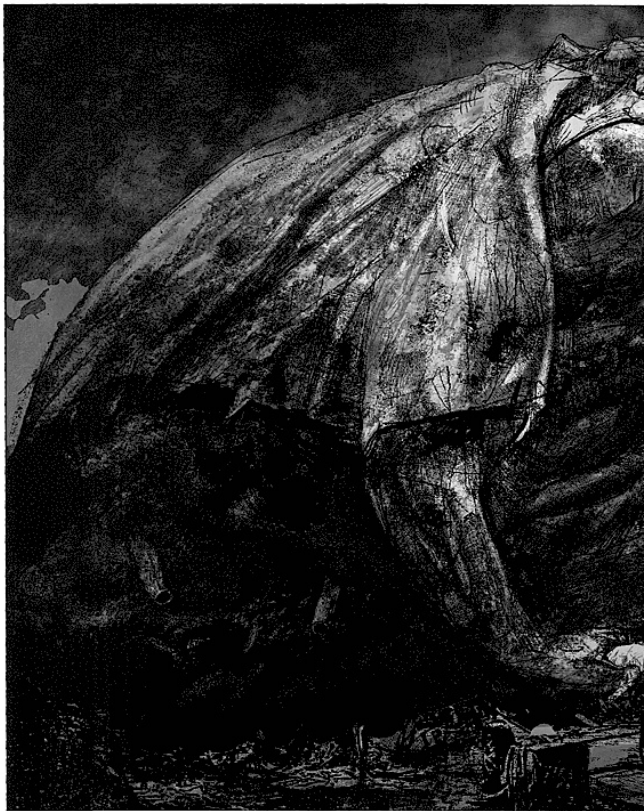
"A HUGE GRAY-BLACK
MONSTROSITY, A WINGED
GARGOYLE-THING WITH A
LEATHERY HEAD LIKE
A HELMET.



"IT WAS STANDING IN
THE RUINS OF PORTLAND,
A THING A MILE HIGH
AT LEAST.



"I COULD SEE WISPS OF
CLOUD FLOATING AROUND
ITS PLATED ARMS. THERE
WERE SCREAMING PEOPLE
STRUGGLING IN ITS
TALONED FISTS."





"AND EVEN THOUGH
IT WAS A DREAM--

"--I HOPE^d IT
WAS A DREAM--

"--JUST A
DREAM--

"I KNEW

"KNEW

"IT HAD
ESCAPED,

"FROM THE STANDING
STONES IN ACKERMAN'S
FIELD."

END OF BOOK ONE

MARC GUGGENHEIM ON ADAPTING "N."

He had me at "Stephen King."

I was on the phone with Joe Quesada, Editor-in-Chief extraordinaire of Marvel Comics, and he'd just pitched me — offered me, actually, for who was I to say "no"? — a gig adapting an as yet unpublished, at the time of this conversation at least, short story written by Mr. King. The idea was that I'd first adapt the story into a series of twenty-five "mobisodes" — short one to one-and-a-half minute segments that could be downloaded easily on, say, a mobile phone (but which are now available for download on — shameless plug alert — iTunes). Then, after the mobisodes had aired (streamed? downloaded? it's tough to keep lingo current in the 21st Century) I would adapt my adaptation into comic form

for publication as a mini-series.

No, I'd never adapted another writer's work before. No, I'd never written a "mobisode" before. No, I'd never even watched a mobisode at that point.

No, I didn't let any of that stop me from saying yes, yes, a thousand times yes.

I mentioned it was a Stephen King story, right?

To make a long story about adapting a short story for long-form short (yes, I just wrote that), I wrote the twenty-five episode mobisode series in record time. If I'm being honest (and I'm trying to be), I wrote it so fast because it was the only way to get it done in the amount of time we had in order to get the mobisodes finished in advance of the publica-



tion of the book in which N. would be featured, *Just After Sunset*. But in keeping with my pledge of honesty, the series wrote so fast because I was working with a story that was sound in its bones. N. is extremely well constructed, which should come as no surprise given who the author is, but it's particularly impressive considering that the entire narrative comes in the form of various pieces of what I like to call "documentation" — a letter, a psychiatrist's notes, a newspaper clipping. Mr. King was telling an entire story — and a compelling one, at that — through "real" writings that can't help but draw the reader in, making you part of the story. Not to spoil the ending, but I feel like the conclusion is an invitation on Mr. King's part to become part of the story.

Actually, given the subject matter of the story, Mr. King's invitation is more like a threat.

Unfortunately, the "documentation" element of the story was something that, by necessity, had to be jettisoned for the mobisode series. For the comic adaptation (excuse me, graphic novel) I wanted to inject them back in and that's what those splash pages at the start of each new chapter are meant to invoke. I asked our brilliant artist, Alex Maleev, to draw those pages as "photo-real" so as to convey the sense that you're staring at the same papers and documents that the characters are talking about.

And that's my gentle segue to talking about Mr. Maleev.





If Joe hadn't hooked me with Stephen King, I still would've been on board once Alex Maleev's name was dropped. There's a lot I like — nay, love — about working in comics. One of them — in fact, it's in the top two — is that I occasionally get to work with people whose work I've always been a huge fan of. His work here is nothing short of stupendous. The only problem with talented people is that they make everything look easy. But Alex didn't take the easy road here. Lord knows he could have. I specifically wrote the comic script to make use of as many of Alex's illustrations from the mobisode series as possible. Since Alex works digitally, this recycling should have lightened his workload considerably. But Alex was clearly interested in giving you, the comic book reader, as new an experience as possible so that if you're a fan of the mobisode series (excuse me, Webbie-nominated mobisode-series), there's still something new to find within these pages.



But that's not all that's new.

At Marvel's request, I've laid in new story beats — the opening sequence of Book One is an example — that aren't contained in either the mobisode series or Mr. King's original story. So as you read — though I would prefer to use the word experience — this series, new details, new characters and new mysteries will open up. If you're a fan of either the mobisodes or the original story and were curious, as I was, about the origins of Ackerman's Field or of its field stones, you'll want to keep reading on (and pay attention to, for example, Page 3, Panel 5 and Page 16, Panel 4).

Stephen King painted a Mona Lisa and Marvel handed me a brush and asked me to extend the picture. In doing so, I've endeavored to take inspiration from Mr. King and honor his creative intent — at least, as much as I've divined from his story — as possible. If there are elements herein that don't work for you or ring false, they're likely mine.

I'll leave you with two final notes.

The first is one that I'm sure Mr. King would share: Life is strange. When I scripted the mobisode series, a good friend of mine, Andy Ackerman, had just been diagnosed with cancer. It's ironic that Mr. King's story had me typing "Ackerman" repeatedly over the course of writing the mobisode series.

Unfortunately, when the time came to write the comic adaptation, Andy had passed away only a few months earlier and writing his name was like picking at a scab. I think he would have liked this story. He certainly would have been tickled that I was working on adapting it into a comic book. And I'd like to dedicate that work to his memory.

The second thought is that this piece is exactly 1000 words.

A good number.

Marc Guggenheim
Los Angeles, California
February 2010
www.legalscribe.net

STEPHEN KING'S

ISSUE 1



SKETCHBOOK

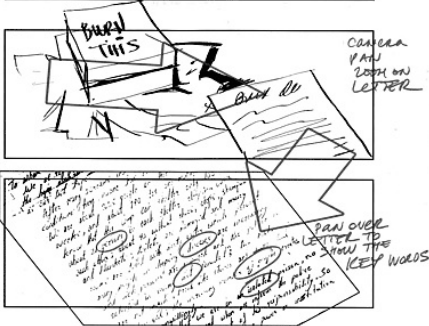
ALEX MALEEV ON ADAPTING "N."

Must have been 20 years since I read a Stephen King story. That one scared the crap out of me. I found myself reading it in front on my laptop with my hood on and crunched on my chair like a sparrow. It was weird, as I am a tall guy and I don't shrink as much. I had goose bumps and didn't think I blinked.

Some time later it was done and done. We had agreed to do the motion version of it with plans to release it later as a comic book. I was attached to it. Marc Guggenheim was penning the adaptation. Stephen King's name was heading the cover, what could possibly go wrong? I was given a great opportunity and a short but welcome break from super heroes. I had the chance to cross the border of the Bendis Republic and join the opposition for a stint. And it has been great for me so far, a truly fantastic chance to tango with an established writer such as Marc and an honor to have been trusted with King's work.

I must thank my own accountant John who was the logical choice to play N. He played him with such conviction that I still wonder what kind of nightmares he dreams. He was N.

Check out Alex Maleev's storyboards from the original N. webisodes.



BACKLASH
SAGA RATE
COULD
MOVE



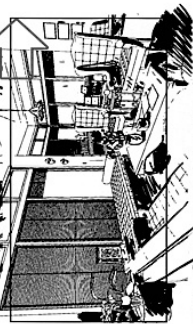
FOCUS ON
HAND BOX
BUILT.
THE BUILD
HAND
TO
FOCUS
ON
BOX



WHAT
SPINES
PHOTO



BOOMING ON FACE
SLIGHTLY.



BY SEPARATE PHOTO
COULD SHIFT

zooming on face
slightly.



part
zoom



zooming on face
slightly.



zoom out
on girl



part to zoom
B.



could
shift

zoom
part

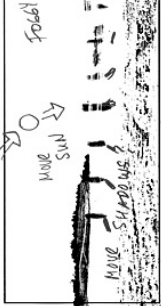
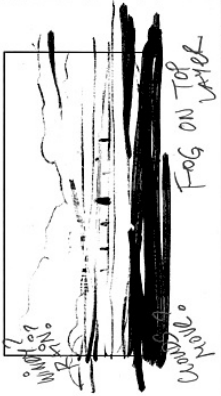
SCREEN TURNS BLACK



BG SEPARATE LAYER



NO NO NO NO NO



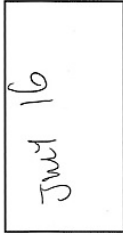
FOGGY



NO NO NO NO NO



1 LAPERS



2 LAPERS



2 LAPERS



2 LAPERS

AL



2 LAPERS

2 LAPERS



2 LAPERS

2 LAPERS



1 UNCL



B UNCL
CROSS
CROSS
B6 UNCL



2 UNCL
2 UNCL
2 UNCL



2 UNCL
2 UNCL
2 UNCL



FB

USE 14.09.03



MOON COULD
MOVE
OR CLOUDS
OVER IT



FB

USE 14.09.03



SLAN ROOM
ON B



Monster concept for
the cover for N. #1

Alex Maleev's cover
sketch for N. #1.



STEPHEN KING'S N

NEXT ISSUE





Can you catch a mental illness the same way you can catch a cold? Until he met patient N., Doctor John Bonsaint would have said that such an idea was ridiculous. But despite himself, Bonsaint finds the curious case of N. plaguing him, night and day. But how far down the rabbit hole will he follow his patient... and what monsters lie at the bottom?

Based on the harrowing short story by acclaimed author Stephen King, *N.* brings together the team of fan-favorite writer Marc Guggenheim (*Amazing Spider-Man*, ABC's *Eli Stone*) and blockbuster artist Alex Maleev (*Daredevil*, *Spider-Woman* motion comic) in an ever-deepening cycle of madness and terror.

DIRECT EDITION

PARENTAL ADVISORY
FOR STRONG LANGUAGE & CONTENT



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